

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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TAGS: BTRA, OVIP, EG

SUBJECT: TIME MIDEAST "NEWSTOUR"

REF: CAIRO 731, RABAT 581

1. SUMMARY: TIME CORRESPONDENT WILTON WYNN REPORTS THAT THIS YEAR'S NEWSTOUR" WAS OUTSTANDING SUCCESS. IN THE COURSE OF IT, GROUP WAS MOST FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY ARAB LEADERS AND DEVELOPED MUCH GREATER APPRECIATION AND SYMPATHY FOR ARAB VIEW-POINT. POSITION PAPER NOW BEING DRAFTED FOR PRESENTATION TO PRESIDENT CALLING FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

2. TIME CAIRO CORRESPONDENT, WILTON WYNN, HAS JUST RETURNED FROM "NEWSTOUR" AND REPORTS THAT AT "SELF-DEBRIEFING" IN RABAT IT WAS DECIDED THAT A POSITION PAPER SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR PRESENTATION TO PRESIDENT FORD ON FEBRUARY 14 STATING THE CONSENSUS OF THE GROUP AS CALLING FOR AN ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AS A PRE-CONDITION FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT.

3. WYNN NOTED THAT AT BEGINNING OF TOUR SEVERAL MEMBERS OF GROUP WERE EXTREMELY PRO-ISRAELI AND GIVEN TO MAKING CONDESCENDING COMMENTS ABOUT THE ARABS. IT IS HIS OBSERVATION THAT VISITS MADE GREAT IMPRESSION ON THEM AND CHANGED THINKING DRAMATICALLY IN SEVERAL CASES. GENERAL REACTION WAS THAT ISRAELI LEADERS

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WERE EXTREMELY ARROGANT AND SEEMED DIVORCED FROM REALITY IN

DISCUSSING PROBLEM WHILE ARAB LEADERS DISPLAYED UNEXPECTED MODERATION AND REASONABLENESS. THEY EVEN FOUND THIS TRUE OF THE PALESTINIANS THEY MET IN BEIRUT.

4. WYNN FEELS THAT ESPECIALLY CONGENIAL MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SADAT IN ASWAN SET TONE FOR WHOLE TOUR. GROUP FOUND SADAT A MOST IMPRESSIVE PERSON AND MANY NOTED THAT HE "TALKED SUCH GOOD SENSE."

5. ASWAN VISIT WAS RELAXED AND INFORMAL CHARACTERIZED BY VERY FRANK EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. WHEN THEY ARRIVED AT HOTEL THEY FOUND PRIME MINISTER HEGAZY AND MINISTER OF RECONSTRUCTION OSMAN WAITING FOR THEM IN GARDEN. LATER PRESIDENT JOINED GROUP, SAT DOWN ON COUCH, LIT PIPE AND ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD NOT GIVE SPEECH BUT JUST WANTED TO TALK WITH THEM.

6. TO QUESTION ON EGYPTIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS, SADAT REPLIED THAT HE HAD BETTER NOT ANSWER BECAUSE "I DON'T WANT TO GET INTO ANY MORE TROUBLE WITH THE RUSSIANS."

7. ON U.S.-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS HE SAID THAT HE UNDERSTANDS SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP U.S. HAS WITH ISRAEL. "KEEP IT," HE SAID, "BUT TREAT US AS FRIENDS ALSO."

8. NEAR END OF MEETING, FRANK PACE URGED SADAT TO VISIT THE U.S. SUGGESTING THAT HE WOULD MAKE A VERY FAVORABLE IMPRESSION ON THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. SADAT REPLIED, "I'M DYING TO GO BUT HELP ME, BOYS, HELP ME."

9. SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS WITH HEGAZY AND OSMAN ON ECONOMIC SITUATION AND INVESTMENT POSSIBILITIES ALSO FRUITFUL. HOWEVER, MEETING WITH SPEAKER OF PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY AND MILITARY BRIEFING AT NASSER MILITARY ACADEMY LESS SUCCESSFUL AS SPEAKER WAS VERY AGGRESSIVE AND CRITICAL OF U.S. AND MILITARY BRIEFER ENGAGED IN ANTI-ZIONIST TIRADE WHICH AFTE 45 MINUTES HAD ONLY REACHED 1932.

10. EVALUATION OF TRIP BY MEMBERS OF GROUP WHO HAD MADE PREVIOUS TOURS WAS THAT THIS WAS BY FAR THE MOST INTERESTING AND USEFUL ONE TO DATE. WYNN'S CONCLUSION IS THAT THE EXPERIENCE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MEETING THE LEADERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST HAD AN "AMAZING IMPACT" ON THE GROUP IN TERMS OF DEVELOPING A GREATER APPRECIATION AND SYMPATHY FOR ARAB VIEWPOINT.

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